

Title I and Community Eligibility Provision Frequently Asked Questions

1. Q: What is Community Eligibility Provision or CEP?

A: Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) is an alternative way to serve universal free breakfast and lunch to all students in high poverty districts and schools. This program requires schools to offer breakfast and lunch but will allow individual schools to count and claim meals without the normal free and reduced application process. Schools that participate in CEP will no longer be required to collect Free and Reduced Price School Meals Family Applications to determine student eligibility for free meals. Meals will still need to be counted at Point of Service (POS), but just total meals, not meals by eligibility category.

2. Q: How can we qualify?

A: Any school building that has an Identified Student Percentage (ISP) of 40% or more, according to the building-level data reflective as of April 1 of a given year, will be eligible to participate in the following year. The percentage is calculated by taking all directly certified students and dividing by the student enrollment. Districts can participate in a variety of ways: by individual school building ISP, groups of schools' combined ISP, or by an entire district's combined.

3. Q: What are the advantages of CEP?

A: The advantages include:

- All students receive free breakfast and lunch
- Faster moving lunch lines
- Improves nutrition to students at-risk
- Reduces paperwork at the school district level
- Simplifies meal counting and claiming
- Increases breakfast and lunch participation

4. Q: What are “Identified Students”?

A: “Identified Students” refers to all students that are certified for free meals by any means other than the submission of individual paper applications. This definition includes students directly certified: Federal Head Start, Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and Temporary Assistance for Needed Families (TANF), as well as students identified as homeless, migrant youth, runaways and foster children certified through means other than an application. Students who are categorically eligible based on submission of a free and reduced price application are not included.

5. Q: Do reduced priced students count as “Identified Students”?

A: No, “Identified Students” are students that are eligible for free meals without the need for a Household Application for Free and Reduced Price Meals. This group consists of students that are eligible for free meals through direct certification: homeless, migrant, runaway, Federal Head Start, TANF, SNAP, FDPIR, and Medicaid.

6. Q: Do I have to have all schools within my district participate in the CEP?

A: No. Districts can elect to have one school, a group of schools, or the entire school district participate.

7. Q: How will districts be reimbursed for meals if the calculated participation rate is less than 100%?

A: Districts will be reimbursed by multiplying their ISP by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) authorized factor of 1.6 to determine the percentage of free meals. If the percentage is less than 100% free meals, the district will be required to pay the remaining percentage from non-federal sources.